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ABSTRACT

This workbook is the final program in a four part series to help individuals decide if a doctoral program is for them. Participants in the program systemically look at commitment, career goals, possible alternatives, and action strategies in regard to pursuing doctoral studies. In determining commitment, internal and external hindrances to decision making are identified through review of a case study and through writing and analysis of personal stories. Life career goals are explored by the analysis and writing of personal obituaries. Following goal identification, alternatives are explored by arranging them in various combinations with associated value ratings (best outcome, worst outcome, inituitive feeling). The final exercise is a plan of action, which includes the chosen alternative, completion date, sequential steps, and intermediate completion dates for each step. (BL)

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Is A Doctorate for Me: A Workbook for Decision Making

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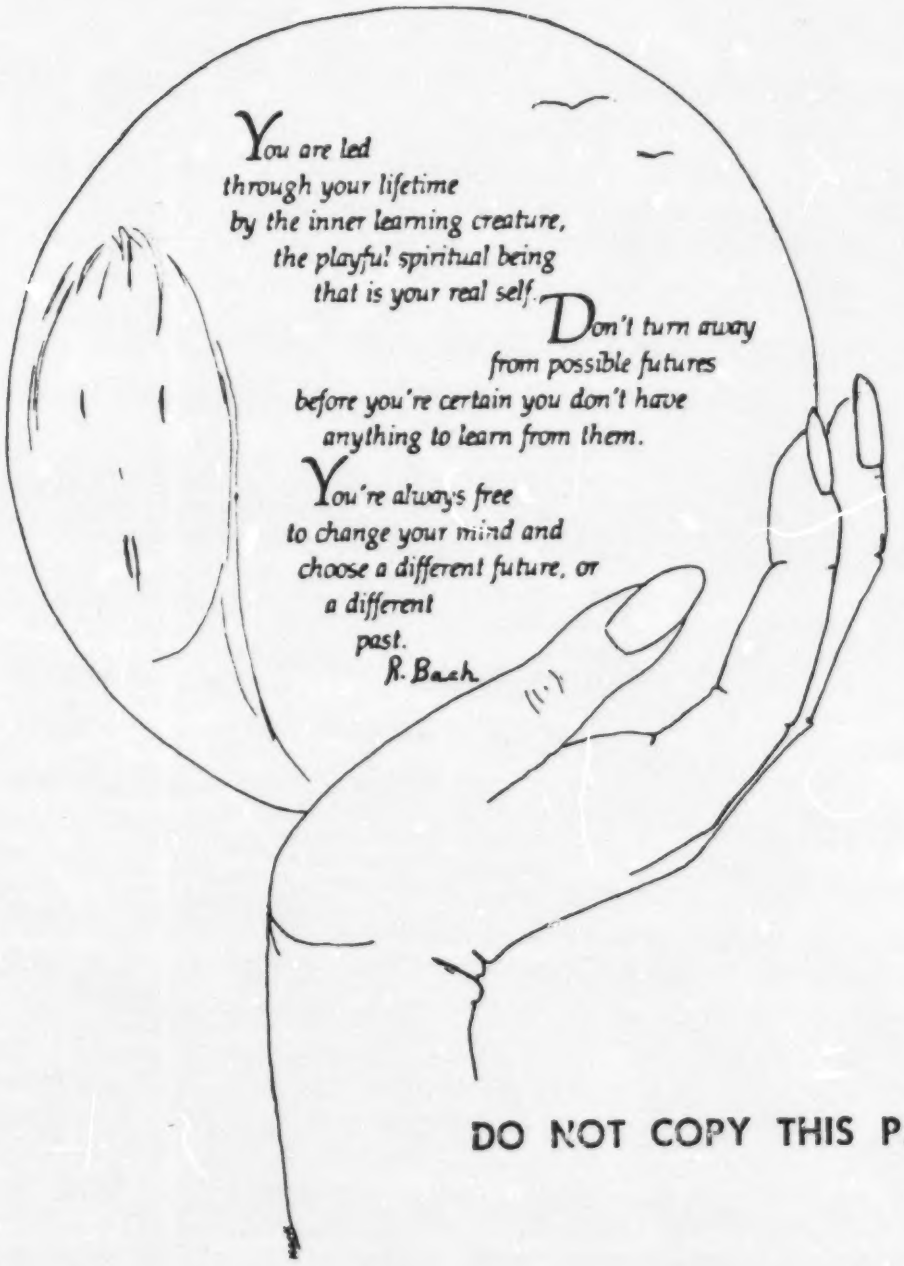

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INTRODUCTION

This paper was developed as the final program in a four part series sponsored by ACES, AHEAD and the APGA Placement Center to help the participants decide if a doctoral program is for them. The participants had identified the decision to be made as "should I or should I not commit myself to doctoral studies." They had the opportunity to gather information concerning the myths of doctoral studies, faculty expectations and the way the participants should approach these further studies.

In this paper the readers will be asked to further their decision making process by looking at their commitment, career goals, possible alternatives and action strategies. The authors hope the readers' career plans will be further clarified by these simple but powerful tasks.

The authors wish to acknowledge the contribution of the work done by J. R. Epperley, S. E. Forrer, J. F. Cooper, J. A. Inge and J. S. Trabandt, as well as all the career development specialists who have been a great influence on them.*

*Epperley, J.R., Forrer, S.E., Cooper, J.F., Inge, J.A. and Trabandt, J.S., Emphasis: Decision. Salt Lake City: Olympus Publishing Company, 1977.

COMMITMENT

In order to help you formulate your commitment toward a desired end, you are asked first to identify the hindrances that prevent you from making your decision. To provide you with practice in helping you with this task you are asked to read Sharon's story and identify what internal and external influences hinder her.

Sharon

Sharon is 24 years old. She has just completed her master's degree in counseling, and will graduate this spring. After college she had gone directly to graduate school, thus she has never worked in the field of counseling. The decision she now faces is whether she should get a job or continue her education.

Sharon has a boyfriend and they are very seriously planning a future. He has been working for 2 years as an executive, while she has been in graduate school. Her boyfriend is very proud of her and supportive, but would now like to settle down to begin a life and family together.

Her decision would be easier for her if she followed her boyfriend's wishes, but she also is considering her career goals. Since high school she has wanted to get her doctorate and set up a private practice. She has always gotten support to achieve this goal from her family. The finances have been a strain and now she would have to take out a loan to get her degree.

Check the hindrances that Sharon is experiencing.

Internal Hindrances

_____ Fear of change

_____ Fear of losing loved ones

_____ Lack of self-confidence

_____ Fear of making the wrong decision

_____ Other, specify

External Hindrances

_____ Financial burdens

_____ Marital wishes

_____ Boyfriend's job

_____ Societal job expectations (that is, the idea she "should" start to work.)

_____ Other, specify

Now write your story concerning the issue of furthering your studies.

What hindrances are you experiencing?

Internal

External

Think back to another major decision you had to make and identify the hindrances that existed then.

Internal

External

By comparing the two exercises in which you identified your hindrances in decision making do you see similarities? If so, please write them down.

Do these similarities, if they exist, represent a typical personal approach in dealing with decision making?

_____ No _____ Yes, if yes please write it down.

If a friend had your personal approach in decision making, what suggestions would you offer to help overcome it?

What will you do to overcome it?

In the following section we will help you identify life career goals.

Career Goals

The purpose of this section is to help you identify your life ambitions which include your career goals. Again, a practice script was created to aid you in identifying those goals. The case of Sharon will be furthered in that she has now written her own obituary. Read what she wrote.

Sharon Hopkins

Sharon Hopkins, 288 Franklin St., Philadelphia, wife of Scott Hopkins, died today in the hospital after an illness. Sharon was 65.

Born in Scranton, Pa., daughter of Adam and Helen Miller, she received her master's degree from Marywood College in Scranton and her doctorate from the University of Maine at Orono, Me. She had a private practice as a marriage and family specialist. She was also a member of St. Mary's Church where she developed a Parent Effectiveness Training Program.

From this obituary some of the goals achieved by Sharon included a marriage, a family, a doctorate, a career related job and involvement in community work.

Directions:

What would you like to be remembered for in your life? Quickly write your obituary.

From your obituary list three long term goals. Include marital/family status, educational and employment.

From this exercise you may have developed three major goals. Having identified these goals, it is much easier to identify all the possible ways to attain them.

ALTERNATIVES

Having showed you the process involved in identifying your goals the next step is to implement them into feasible alternatives. In developing these alternatives take your previously identified long range goals and arrange them in various combinations.

On the following chart Sharon has listed 5 possible alternatives from her life goals. In the 1st column she has listed the best aspects of pursuing these optio.s and rated them with a value from +1 to +10.

In the next column she rated the worst possibilities which are valued from -1 to -10. Added to these two columns is a column devoted to intuitive feeling. Intuitive feeling is the gut level emotional reaction to the alternative which was rated in a range from -3 to +3. By totaling these points she was able to see the value for each alternative.

ALTERNATIVES	BEST OUTCOME (Maximum +10)	WORST OUTCOME (Maximum -10)	INTUITIVE FEELING (+ or -3)	TOTAL
1. Go for Ed.D full time remain single until completion of studies.	a) finish more quickly b) get degree - set up private practice +9	a) finanical difficult b) miss settling down - losing boyfriend c) won't succeed in school -7	+2	+4
2. Ed.D part-time work way through remain single until completion of studies	a) work experience increasing b) money to pay for school +8	a) length of time to complete degree b) miss settling down by losing boyfriend c) age for having children serious factor -6	-1	+1
3. Ed.D part-time get married	a) settle down with husband b) financial help c) study and establish a home +5	a) children and husband take all time from school -4	+2	+3
4. get married Ed.D at a later date	a) settled-more financially secure b) have children at good age c) break from study +7	a) may never get chance to go bac' b) family responsibilities -10	+1	-2
5. Ed.D full-time married	a) finish studies quickly b) husband for emotional financial support c) set up career more quickly +7	a) time-strain on marriage b) put off children and then age is a factor -8	-2	-3

Write your five most viable alternatives

ALTERNATIVES	BEST OUTCOME (Maximum +10)	WORST OUTCOME (Maximum -10)	INTUITIVE FEELING (+ or -3)	TOTAL
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

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PLAN OF ACTION

A. State chosen alternative.

B. Set a date for completion of task.

C. List sequential steps for completion of task.

D. Set a date next to the above steps for completion of each task.

E. You have decided - Go for it!